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SATURDAY
MAY 30, 1953

Instead of making a speech in Luxembourg at the Memorial Day exercises at the American Cemetery, I am leaving this evening for New York. I had expected to go to the services this morning at the Pro-Cathedral, but Paul Reynaud called me and said he wanted to see me at once. He, his wife, and the cargo of antique which we had bought in London arrived simultaneously.

Reynaud said he had a "case of conscience" and wanted to consult me. Since Mendès-France was trying to form a government, since he was a personal friend and also had supported Reynaud in his recent try to become Prime Minister, Reynaud was anxious to support Mendès-France's candidacy. However, he was fearful of the reaction abroad to Mendès' views on the Indo-China War, especially his announced policy of trying to negotiate a peace with Ho Chi Minh.

I told Reynaud that, entirely regardless of the wisdom or reverse of these views, I considered that such a proposal at this time by a French Prime Minister without prior consultation with the other allied powers would have the most unfortunate consequences and would gravely prejudice whatever influence the French might otherwise be able to exercise at the Bermuda Conference. I minced no words regarding the continuing decline of French prestige abroad, of which Reynaud is fully aware, and how this condition would be accentuated if Mendès-France made an issue of a negotiation with Ho Chi Minh.

We talked for an hour or so. I told Reynaud how much I respected his making an issue of constitutional reform although he knew it was bound to cost him any chance he might have had to be confirmed for investiture.

We had a lunch today for Betty and Sturgis Riddle, Archduke Robert of Austria, Phil Sprouse, Gib and Bill Koren, Bee and Elliot Straus. Afterwards E. and I went down and collected prints and pictures which have been for some weeks a-framing.

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The Pan American plane was due to leave at 8:00 p.m., but as is all too usual, was late and we got off from Orly about 9:40, I disconsolate at leaving E. and the boys behind. I had shared a particularly successful omelet with E. at home, so was not in the mood to attack the warmed-over Maxim steak served on the plane. Why our airlines insist on serving pretentious, unsuitable and heavy meals is beyond me. They should take a leaf out of Air France's book, where cold food and light wines are offered. On Pan Am tonight all who would take them were well laced with cocktails or whiskey, then blown up with steak, and sluiced off with champagne and more whiskey.

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